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- 5.—*Nature Improved, or a New Method of Teaching Languages, exemplified by its Application to Latin, Greek, and French.* By SAMUEL JACKSON, M. D. of Northumberland. Philadelphia. Robert H. Small. 12mo. pp. 166.

THOUGH the subject here announced seems to be sufficiently definite, yet the author has taken a pretty excursive range; and desultory as his tractate is, we shall be excused if, in the few observations we shall make upon it, we shall appear to have caught a little of the same spirit. A small part of the book only is taken up with the subject proposed in the titlepage, and much of it is occupied with the old quarrel about the study of Latin and Greek, and with speculations intended to lead to a decision of what it is most useful for boys and young men to learn; a decision which never has been and never can be made. One man weeps over the supposed tender victims of that tyrannical custom which claims so many years of youth for the Latin and Greek classics. Another is tormented with anxiety for such as are made to delve in mathematics, thinking that mere abstract truth is wholly worthless. A third trembles with alarm for those who have had the misfortune to acquire a taste for chemistry and mineralogy, because it diverts them from all that is valuable and beautiful in the world of intellect. But these are idle prejudices. All knowledge is useful; and a boy is none the less fitted for a chemist, or a mathematician, or an engineer, when the season arrives for the display of his peculiar talent, because he has employed his memory in learning his grammar, and his wit in the interpretation of Latin sentences.

We have seen enough of weariness in children produced by tasking their memory and attention in various ways; but not more perhaps in learning grammar, and the meaning of foreign words and phrases, than in learning to repeat their hymns and early lessons in geography, or obtaining the answers in Pestalozzi, or Colburn's Arithmetic. It will be conceded on all hands, that their memory and attention must be cultivated early, in order to secure the full value of these faculties. To this end, too, they must find some reward in the results to encourage future exertion. Now we undertake to say, that there are as many infant scholars delighted with finding that *caput* means head, and *manus* hand, as there are embryo mineralogists who are pleased to learn for the first time, that such a substance is *quartz*, and such another is *anthracite*. And we have seen the face of the child glow with more pleasurable animation in catching the meaning of a good saying of a grave Roman, whether emperor, patrician, plebeian, freedman, or slave, than could be produced by all the elements of physical science which he was capable of comprehending.

There is no great charm to the youthful mind in the elements of any kind of knowledge ; but there is time and capacity in early years for some progress in a great variety of things. A decided preference for any pursuit of learning or science, where it exists, will not fail in due time to be developed ; and where such a preference does not exist, which is the case with much the larger portion of mankind, there is no hazard from storing the mind with a variety of learning, not knowing which portion will ultimately come to most account. We have no wish to dogmatize on this subject ; nor have we any ambition to enter the lists in favor of the ancient classics ; for, though the enemies of classical learning have the popular side of the argument, yet they have long since said all that they have to say, and the more learned among them have had all the aid that they can receive from the endless pratings of sciolists and pretenders. The merits of the question concerning the utility of Latin and Grecian learning remain just where they did a century ago, and this kind of learning will no doubt continue to constitute an important part of early education.

Dr Jackson is himself, we perceive, not a little conversant with the classic writers of antiquity, and not wholly unapt to show his acquaintance with them ; and if we mistake not, we can see, through the veil of contempt which he has thrown around him, a little self complacency produced by the worthless and contaminating knowledge he has derived from their works. For the most part, one is prone to value what he has taken pains to acquire, in some proportion to the cost. But on the other hand, a pride of character for boldness and independence, and for extricating one's self from the shackles of prejudice and false education, often becomes paramount ; and though the person thus influenced would not lose the credit of his learning, he is willing himself to call it naught,

We had well nigh forgotten to speak of this ' New Method of Teaching Languages,' which, however, it seems to us, is no new method at all. It is substantially the same that we find in Latin primers, and Latin and Greeks readers ; except that the master is to be the grammar and dictionary, instead of sending his pupil to his vocabulary, and etymology, and syntax. Whether this is any advantage or not, the experienced must judge. Classification must begin at some time ; and while we would not keep a boy on his grammar till he turns from it with utter disgust, yet we cannot but think it an advantage to have learnt so much of it, that he may be advanced, by easy gradations, in the combined process of literal translation and grammatical inflexions and construction. We are aware that too much may be, and often is expected of a child ; and, therefore, while we would not teach

him as we would teach a parrot, we would avoid with equal solicitude all exactions in solitary study, which it is beyond his power to meet.

We have grown very suspicious of the modern *arcana* in education. And after all, the whole mystery in the school discipline of youth, is to procure masters of competent learning, who are *apt to teach*, who know when to encourage and when to coerce their pupils, and who, in fine, are so fond of their work, as to excite the sympathy and cooperation of those who attend their instructions.



6.—*Catalogue of the First Exhibition of Paintings in the Athenæum Gallery, consisting of Specimens by American Artists, and a Selection of the Works of the Old Masters, from the Various Cabinets in this City and its Vicinity.* Boston. William W. Clapp. 1827.

THIS Exhibition will close about the time at which these remarks will be published ; and it calls for some notice, although it comes not precisely within our usual course of criticism. It is really a fine collection. We think no one can enter the room without surprise at the number of good pictures, drawn there from the private cabinets of Boston and its immediate vicinity. With such resources, and with the artists, eminent and fast rising into eminence, whom we have among us, this course of exhibition should have begun long ago. It is obviously the best mode of encouraging the art ; and we suppose few will doubt the great importance of cultivating such sources of liberal and refined pleasure. We think there are peculiar circumstances, which call on us in this country to do all we can in aid of such pursuits. Public amusements are and must be a part of the system of civilized life ; and the character and condition of a country cannot fail to be much affected by the nature of them. They are a part of the education of youth, as well as of the relaxation of mature life ; and it cannot be for a moment thought a matter of indifference, whether those hours which the gravest and the busiest spare from labor, and the time which the idle and trifling find it so hard to kill, are spent in galleries of painting and sculpture, in concerts and public gardens, or in bull baitings, bear baitings, and prize rings, not to name other and more odious scenes of dissipation. And the individual who devotes his superfluous wealth to the purchase and enjoyment of works of art, is certainly more likely to pass though life in health and innocence, than one who, for want of other tastes, resorts to the grosser physical indulgen-